2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

The Yakut are mediocre tinsmiths. They solder with pewter though the result is coarse and bulky. The northern Yakut tin with a soldering iron. They do not make tin ware and are unskilled in riveting metals. On the other hand, most of the Yakut blacksmiths are excellent copper and silver workers.

Copper, Gold, and Silversmiths. Most Yakut blacksmiths are expert workers in copper and silver. European archaeologists regard copper and gold as the first metals employed on an appreciable scale between

Fig. 61 *ab* (70–8576), *cd* (70–9073). Child's and Woman's Silver Bracelets. Front and back views.

the Neolithic Period and the Bronze Age. The first copper objects had no tin alloy. Modern Yakut metal workers also use pure copper. From both copper and silver they mould fine, well made small objects, buckles, rings, earrings, crosses, seals, chains, pendants, and other ornaments. From copper scraps they mould and hammer large kettles, tea pots, and even church bells. Their skill in casting equals or even exceeds their smithing. They also smelt and cast gold, making rings, earrings, and bracelets. For smelting copper, silver, and gold, they use small clay forms. Silver is the most desirable metal. They do not like gold,

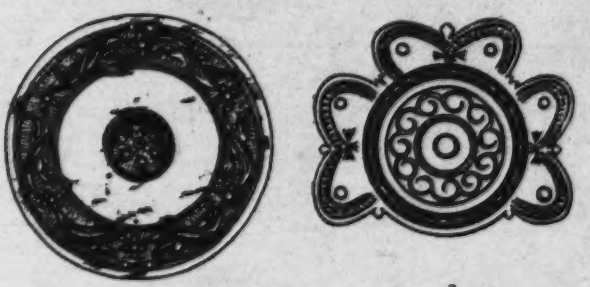
2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

326
301
631
415
177

saying that it looks like copper. Silver plates for saddles are made by smelting a thick plate and hammering it thin. The quality of their silver varies. The best silver objects, the Yakut say, contain 50 per cent of silver, the rest is copper and zinc. The Yakut do not know zinc, but obtain it from imported Russian metallic ware, like latten-brass objects.

Silver Objects. A series of silver bracelets is illustrated in Fig. 61. Fig. 61*cd* is a pair of silver bracelets (*bŏhŏx*), showing the reverse and

Fig. 62 (70-8669, 8670). A Silver Cup and Saucer with engraved Symbolic Representations of Plants.



a *b*

Fig. 63*a*(70-8764), *b*(70-9139). Silver Ornaments. *a*, A decorated silver disc, part of the embellishment for a woman's cap; *b*, A silver belt buckle.

obverse, with the clasp fastened. A child's silver bracelets (*ohobŏhŏhŏ*) are engraved with symbolic representation of plants. On the large bracelets (Fig. 61*cd*) is also engraved a zigzag or finger ornament.

A silver cup and saucer, with engraved symbolic representations of plants is illustrated in Fig. 62. Under the upper rim and above the bottom of the cup are circles resembling twisted basketry fiber. The same pattern is repeated on the saucer. Both the cup (*chāsky*) and the saucer (*bŭlŭcha*) are called by distorted Russian names which are

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

actually: *chaska* and *bludéchko*, demonstrating that both vessels were adopted from the Russians. On the other hand, all the wooden goblets and other kumiss vessels have genuine Yakut-Turkic names.

Fig. 63*a* is a silver disc (*tusaxta*) used for the decoration of the front of the top of a woman's fur cap. The engraved ornamentation represents

Fig. 64 *a* (70–9165), *b* (70–9139), *c* (70–8519). Riding Gear. *a*, *c*, Whips with silver ornamented handles; *b*, Silver ornamented bridle.

a symbolic plant pattern. In Fig. 63*b* is illustrated a silver belt buckle called *birāskā*, the Yakut version of the Russian word, *pryáshka*. Of interest is the central ornament consisting of connecting curves.

Two whips with handles ornamented in silver and a similarly decorated bridle are illustrated in Fig. 64*a–c*. Whips so decorated are

13: Sarytschew--10 [3] N-3 1785-90 (1806) Yakut
116, 291, 301

"The ordinary dress of the Jakutish female differs but little from that of the female [sic], but their best garments are longer and larger than usual, being bordered with many pieces of coloured cloth and Chinese stuffs, worked with bits of silver and copper of different figures, and edged with a broad trimming of beaver and otter's skin. For this dress they have a particular cap, embellished with three tufts of feathers. They adorn their ears with large silver rings, and form their hair into a long queue."

14: Krauss--172-173 E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut -1-2
116, 292, 756, 301, 532

Now I should like to describe the ornaments of the shaman dress. On the front part of the kuma, from the throat down to the lower edge, three storks are represented (kytaly); this is the symbol of the flying up of the shaman. The ember-goose (kogas), too, is a symbol for the same thing.

On the heart there are three little figures of devils (emjagjal, abasy), the symbol of the permanent presence of the demon in the heart, furthermore two representations of the iron heart of the devil (sjurachtimirja).

On the collarbones there are two iron stripes, which are supposed to be a representation exactly of the collarbones (chamargan-timirja).

Tjargjan-berja, a representation of the devils' eyes.
Ojgos-belgjunja, two hip-bones (in the sides).
Ojgos-umochtar, four devils' ribs from each side.

An octagonal figure with seven holes, stitched in the throat region. The shamans refuse to give any information as to this item, saying that nobody would dare to pronounce their names, and to explain their significance. [173]

On the sleeves; two shoulder-blades (bjulgjul-timirja).
Two ulnas (akymal-chapgaga).
Arm joints, two small bones (begalcach-sjusiega).
Two cartilages of the palm of the hand (akymal-uljuga).
Two bones, representing bird wings (tabytal-timirja).

14: Krauss--172-173 E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut-2
116, 292, 756, 301, 532

The fringes on the sleeves mean vulture wings (elie).

On the back: a piece of a seal tail, round children's rattles (abasy-semjaga), all devils ornaments indispensable for a trip to the lower world.

Abasy-balyga, a devil's fish.

Kjular-kjusjanat, the cheerful, gay devil sun; thereon two points of arrows, balyk-kygana, and kandej-sysana, designating the tail of the sun (kjugjan-kuturuka).

Ojbon-timirja, the iron abyss, where the ember-goose hides after having swallowed the shaman. A little bit below, a claw is fixed on this iron, from which the ember-goose will quench his thirst.

Chatat-timirja, the devil's lighter.

Batyrys, a fringe on the tail of the garment.

Two iron arrow points shaped like elk's horns, the significance of which is not certain.

16: Great Britain Admiralty --164 - 165 G-3 (no date)1920 Yakut
116, 142, 177, 301

"The Yakuts differ from one another in physique more than any other Turkic or Mongol people. Those that are well-off and can get enough to eat are from 5 ft. 10 ins. to 6 ft. tall: they are well-proportioned with good chest-measurement, and are robust [165] and active; but in the north, owing to severity of climate and badness of food, we find a very different type: they are below medium height, with a sickly complexion, and unlike most Yakuts, are indolent. Ordinarily they are thick-set, robust, and muscular. They have black wiry hair, which the men cut close to the head, except the Shamans who grow it long and tie it up behind, dark and elongated eyes, broad flat noses, narrow foreheads, small round heads (the men's faces are long, the women's oval), little beard. The women are somewhat ungainly, and do not add to their attractions by the paint and excessive ornament that they affect, and the adoption of European costume still further diminishes their charms."

17: Erman--300-301 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 177, 412, 301, 174, 531

"Long before the Russians came here, the other tribes of Yakuts got from those at Vilui iron axes, awls, and tools for stripping and dressing the hides; together with copper ornaments for their clothes and harness and the metal plates which they, like the Ostyaks, sew on their girdles. But even now when they [301] make use of European guns, every man among them still exercises the skill peculiar to the nation, in making the great knife, or dagger, which is carried under the sanayakh at the waistband. The Yakutian steel is easily distinguished from the Russian, by its being somewhat flexible; and yet blades made of it will cut copper and pewter as easily as the best European blades. The wooden handle of the knife is always ornamented, after the original fashion, with tin work; from which it is evident that they procured the materials from Nerchinsk, before the Russians knew any thing of the metals in that quarter. They cut figures in the wood, and cast the tin into the hollow; a large knob of the metal left at the top of the knife-handle, is then shaped with the chisel. The sheaths of these Yakutian daggers are made of birch bark, and covered with black leather, on which, again, are metal mountings, with straight-lined patterns engraved on them. I had occasion, once before, to mention some decisive proofs of the influence which the Siberians of the furthest north exercised on the civilizations of the Yakuts. Here, on the other hand, certain handicrafts, characteristic of nomadic life, and, above all, the art of working metals, evidently point to a connexion with the tribes at present inhabiting the southern steppes and mountains. The physical character, also, and language of the Yakuts decide in favour of the same view."

37: Dobell--308 G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 171, 291, 301

"The Tongusees and Yakuts dress much alike, particularly the women, wearing abundance of ornaments. Their hair, that hangs in two or three braids behind, is stuck over with small copper or silver plates, more or less rich, in proportion to the fortune of the wearer. Sometimes a silver or copper plate is placed on the forehead. They occasionally wear a close cap, likewise adorned with plates and beads, and often ornament their boots with beads of various colours, having much the appearance of the work on the Wampum belts of the North American savages."

43: Karutz--76 E-2 (no date) 1925 Yakut
116, 291, 301

The clothing of the Yakut differs from the usual Siberian in single respects only; it is characterized by leather, furs, and skins, and by trousers covering the feet, huge boots, coats with the hair turned inward, and furs with the hair turned outward. The coats are often covered with cloth. The caps are made of bear, fox, or otter furs and have the shape of a cone; or else they are made of cloth and are furred. They have flaps for the ears and a long appendage of furs with a tassel at its end. A special feature is head and forehead ribbons with a closed ring-shaped ribbon, embroidered and furred, which is fixed at the sides, runs over cheeks and chin, and is supposed to protect these parts from the cold; moreover, there are beautiful metal ornaments, neck rings like cords, or engraved and flatly forged as well as long chain appendages. The belts,too, which keep the garments together and contain various pockets for tobacco, needles, etc., are adorned with engraved silver plates.

49: Findeisen--10-11 E-1 (no date) 1930 Yakut
116, 177, 291, 301

The work clothing of the women consists of a [11] blouse going down to the ground, and a long waist coat which is decorated with pockets and silver ornaments. A cloth and the simple Russian felt cap serve as head dress. On holidays, however, the women dress in a gown embroidered with bright-colored patterns. A silver belt with a large pair of scissors hanging down, neatly embroidered silver-colored ribbons, which are attached to the shoulder, and a large cross on the chest complete the holiday dress. A conical cap serves as head gear; it is decorated with silver particles and ribbons.

/176 cont./

entering the balagan we were received by the ladies of the house. They had, of course, put on their most beautiful finery; we were struck in particular by the very large silver earrings, which, by the way, are also fashionable among the wealthy Tungus women along the Tunguska and are also acquired there from the Jakuten /Yakut/. After the strenuous tundra trip we made ourselves comfortable at the roaring fire of the fireplace, heartily glad that from here we could, with a good conscience, turn back toward the south, toward home. We had hoped to be here two months earlier -- the reader has learned with what /177/ great difficulties we had made it possible to be here now. /The remainder of p. 177, pp. 178-180, and the first paragraph of p. 181 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign text. Page 181 continues as follows./

Of the living scientists only one had come farther than we on the mainland of Asia -- indeed, by almost three degrees of latitude -- Middendorff at the mouth of the Taimyr. We also did not forget the dead -- the intrepid mariners, Charitón Láptew /Laptev/, Prónt schischtschew /Prontschischev/, Tscheljúskin /Chelyuskin/, and others who had trod this ground almost a century and a half before us undertook from here their daring journeys to explore the coasts of the Arctic Ocean and for the most part also paid here for their zeal with their lives. All our searchings for their graves, for remains of their dwellings, were in vain. On the rocks which Czekanowsky climbed there were in several places remains of old dwelling sites -- whether of theirs remained doubtful. Every tradition of that noble expedition paid for with such tremendous sacrifices /182/has been lost among the inhabitants (1). At that time Russian peasants probably lived

1. So it in fact appeared to us, but in the following year Czekanowsky found the inhabitants of Boljkalák much more communicative. They showed him the graves of Prónt schischtschew and his courageous wife, who had followed him into this desolate place. On the last rock on the right shore of the

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

was associated with the severe frost; this was a particular type of fur collar or mooyturuk made from rings of squirrel tails, so that the fur stood out on all sides; this collar was put round the neck in cold weather and covered both the nose and mouth; as the wearer breathed on it and the breath gradually froze, he kept moving it round so that there was always a dry spot opposite the mouth.

The Yakut heavy fur mittens were made with space for one finger and were attached by laces, by which they hung when taken off.

Typical of the footwear (eterbes) were high kneeboots made of undressed reindeer- or horse-hide, with the hair on the outside. The summer boots (saary) were made of soft leather with a soft sole; the top part was covered with cloth and in the case of women with embroidery; the tops of the boots were tied with laces. Underneath the top footwear they wore high stockings (keenche) made of fur, or, later, cloth made in the shape of the foot. Linings of dry grass were also put inside the boots, and frequently changed.

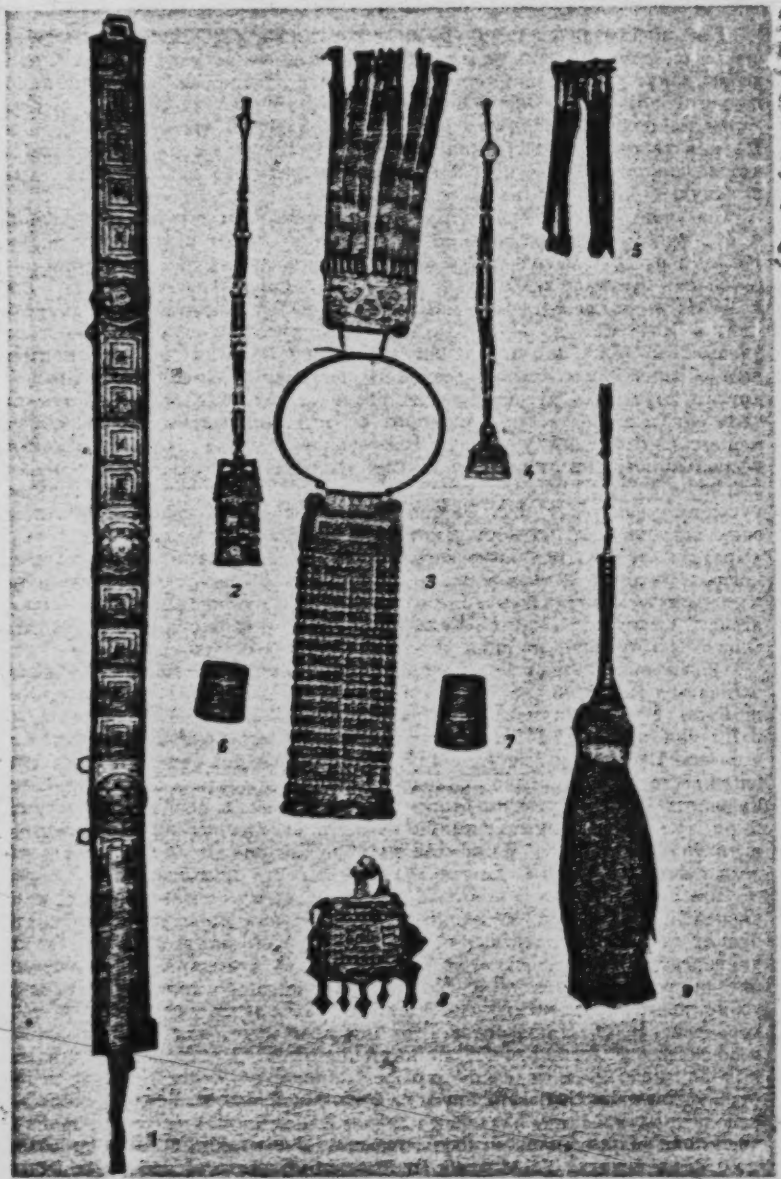
The decorations on the women's clothing were particularly lavish and varied. Apart from various types of embroidery, appliqué and trimming, women also wore metal (silver) adornments, including large pendants consisting of rows of interlinked parallel, patterned chains hanging from a semicircle (kyl'd'yy), silver earrings of the pendant type (*имарҕа*), various patterned bracelets (*бөҕөх*), finger-rings (*биһиилэх*), silver crucifixes (Christian influence) on massive openwork chains and so forth; all these embellishments, chiefly possessed by the toyon women, were very skillfully made by the Yakut smiths.

As regards children's clothing, there was no special type. In the poorer families, the children ran about naked or wore rags; the children of wealthier parents wore the same kind of garments as the adults, except for the size and greater number of adornments.

Food

The diet of the Yakuts from the central ulusy before the Revolution consisted first of dairy products, second, fish products, after which came vegetable products, and, finally, meat. The variety, amount and quality of the food ranged between very wide limits in the various class groups. Dairy products were consumed mainly during the summer, and as far as possible stored up for the winter. Mare's milk was chiefly used to make kumys, a refreshing, nutritious and slightly intoxicating beverage, which the Yakuts drank readily and in large quantities. During the haymaking kumys was sometimes the staple diet; a great deal of it was drunk at summer festivals (*ысыах*—the kumys festival). Over the last few decades before the Revolution, on account of the decline in horse-breeding and the development of agriculture, the comsumption of kumys dropped more and more. Mare's milk was not stocked for the winter. Cow's milk was not used very much in the fresh form, but was used to make a greater variety of products. First place among them was taken by the so-called suorat, or sora, a particular kind of thick sour milk with or without some cream added. In summer fresh suorat was the commonest food, but it was also used to make winter stocks; for this purpose it was kept in large birchbark vats, to which were added berries (blueberries), roots, bones (which dissolved in the lactic acid) and any left-over milk product, and as winter approached, the whole lot was frozen and kept in that form. The resulting tar was used in wintertime to make the drink butugas, to which was added, apart from the tar, water, a little flour, pine sapwood, roots, and so on. Cream skimmed from the milk was used in the fresh, whipped form; it was called *күөрэх*, highly

[p. 286]



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Silver ornaments: 1—silver belt; 2—embellishments for braids; 3—necklace; 4—women's tinder steel; 5—pendant for braids; 6, 7—bracelets; 8—women's bags; 9—fan.